

NORTHFIELD CONSERVATION COMMISSION
Minutes of April 10, 2013

The meeting was called to order by Pam Knox at 6:30 pm.

- I. Roll Call:** Present: Commissioners Pam Knox, Laura Hill-Eubanks, Ruth Ruttenberg, Russ Barrett, Leslie Matthews, Christine Barnes
- II. Approval of Minutes:** March 13, 2013 minutes approved 4-0-2

III. Discussion

a. Friends of the Winooski Riparian Planting

Scheduled plantings are:

- May 7 Dole Hill Rd., Meagan Gilbert, Coordinator
- May 8 Wellfield, Ann Smith, Coordinator
- May 13 Norwich property, Leah Scribner, Coordinator. USFW and grade 7 students will work on this project.

Volunteers are needed for all three of these events. Pam will place a notice in the Front Porch Forum. Fliers will be posted in Norwich, Brown Library, Grand Union, Kenyons, NSB and Merchants bank, Senior Center. Publicity by Leslie.

b. Questions/Concerns for Planning Commission

- Steve Fitzhugh spoke with the Commission for about 30 minutes about a shared concern that the Planning and Conservation Commissions be more active together
- PC will be revising the Municipal Plan by 2014 and would like our input on sections concerning the CC (e.g. natural resources, reduction of fuel oil dependency)
- By-laws will undergo review as well
- Municipal Plan is on the website under Planning and Zoning
- Town and Village merger will lead to a Developmental Review Board in lieu of a PC and Zoning Board (by town vote)
- Examples of revisions: zoning needs to be by land use; recreation use should be under zones; eventually go beyond revisions of content to goals with help of CC
- CC contribution: develop a list of our priorities that we can discuss in joint session with PC by September 2013 at latest

After Steve Fitzhugh left, the Commissioners continued discussion:

- Suggested approach: review maps of area (biofinder, Jens Hilke, Natural Resource Atlas, VT Geographic Information Services)
- What does the Plan miss, and how can it be strengthened?
- How can the by-laws better support the goals and intent of conservation in our town?
- Clarification needed re how zoning rules interact with regulation
- Need to bring planning into harmony with by-laws, as the Plan is not binding

The decision was made to invite Michele Braun (ZA) to a CC meeting as soon as possible.

Pam will contact her.

- Focus on what we want in the Plan

- Develop supporting by-laws
- Make the process inclusive and transparent with the town citizens
- Lobby for financial support

Homework for all Commissioners:

- Read chapters 6 and 7 in *Conserving Vermont's Natural Resources*. Laura will send out the chapters via email to everyone
- Bring maps to the next meeting

c. Home Energy Challenge: Laura reported on this topic:

- Attended Rotary Club meeting; attended Farmers' Market
- Spoke with Efficiency VT about doing another forum/joint workshop with them
- Laura and Ruth will work together to set date

d. Conservation Camp (ages 12-14): Pam reported on this topic:

- Will go to classrooms to announce opportunity
- Will seek donations from businesses/individuals to support the cause
- Determine guidelines for asking for contributions
- List contributors in Town Report (businesses)
- Low income preference (possibly use free/reduced to aid in target group)
- Draw names from hat for selection; write an essay?

e. May Wildflower Walk: Leslie is willing to lead a walk in May for spring ephemerals:

- May 18 or June 8, TBD, beginning at 10:00 am
- Leslie will send confirming email

f. Town Forest Plan

- Review Middlesex Town Forest Management Plan
- Break down the model and overlay it on our Town Forest Plan
- Pam will send via email

III. Additional Business

- *Caring for Canopy* grants (\$5000 or \$500): seed money to develop/sustain a community-wide tree program (inventory, planting, etc.)
- Pam will talk with Michelle re initiating this effort
- Begin with the Village; identify Ash trees for monitoring/intervention (beetle infestation)

IV. Public Participation

VI. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted: Christine Barnes
April 12, 2013